

**Emergency Employment of Army and Other
Resources**

Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations

**Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, DC
15 January 1980**

Unclassified

SUMMARY of CHANGE

AR 500-2

Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations

This is a transitional reprint of this publication which places it in the new UPDATE format. Any previously published permanent numbered changes have been incorporated into the text.

Effective 15 February 1980

Emergency Employment of Army and Other Resources

Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

E. C. MEYER
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

J. C. PENNINGTON
Major General, United States Army
The Adjutant General

History. This UPDATE issue is a reprint of the original form of this regulation that was published on 15 January 1980. Since that

time, no changes have been issued to amend the original.

Summary. This revision updates policy, procedures, and responsibilities for SAR operations.

Applicability. See paragraph 2.

Proponent and exception authority. Not applicable

Army management control process. Supplementation. Local supplementation of this regulation is prohibited, except upon approval of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans.

Interim changes. Interim changes are not official unless they are authenticated by The Adjutant General. Users will destroy interim

changes on their expiration dates unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

Suggested Improvements. The proponent agency of this regulation is the Office of Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. Users are invited to send comments and suggestions for improvement on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to HQDA(DAMO–ODS), WASH, DC 20310.

Distribution. Active Army, ARNG, and USAR: To be distributed in accordance with DA Form 12–9A requirements for AR, Emergency Employment of Army and Other Resources—D.

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*This regulation supersedes AR 500–2, 28 January 1975.

RESERVED

1. Purpose

This regulation establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities for providing Department of the Army resources and assistance to civil authorities in support of search and rescue (SAR) operations within the continental United States (CONUS) during peacetime conditions.

2. Applicability

This regulation applies to the Active Army and US Army Reserve (USAR). It applies to the Army National Guard (ARNG) when in a federalized status.

3. Explanation of terms

a. *Civil Air Patrol (CAP)*. The CAP is the world's largest inland volunteer civilian SAR organization. It provides SAR services as an official auxiliary of the United States Air Force (USAF). The CAP represents the primary SAR resource available to the civil sector.

b. *Imminent serious condition*. An incident which is of such gravity as to require immediate assistance to save human life, prevent immediate human suffering, or mitigate major destruction or damage to property.

c. *Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic (MAST) Program*. The MAST Program is an interdepartmental program of the Departments of Defense, Transportation, and Health, Education, and Welfare. The MAST Program provides military medical and rescue helicopters, paramedical personnel and medical equipment to respond to serious civilian medical emergencies.

d. *MAST mission*. An emergency helicopter transport mission which may include the recovery of persons injured in traffic-related and other accidents, interhospital patient transfer, or movement of emergency blood and medical supplies, medical personnel, or donor organs. MAST missions normally involve a recovery of a patient, with a known medical condition or obvious injuries, from a known location.

e. *National Search and Rescue (SAR) Plan*. The document of national policy which outlines broad responsibilities for the effective use of all available facilities for all types of SAR missions. The National SAR Plan identifies the following regions and coordination responsibilities:

(1) *Inland region*. The inland area of the continental United States, except the inland area of Alaska and waters under the jurisdiction of the United States. The USAF is the responsible SAR coordinator for this area. The Commander, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) is designated as the USAF Executive Agent for SAR operations in the Inland Region.

(2) *Maritime region*. The waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, the State of Hawaii, the territories and possessions of the United States (except the Canal Zone), and the high seas. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is the SAR coordinator for this region.

(3) *Overseas regions*. Unified command areas overseas, including the inland area of Alaska, which are not included within the Inland or Maritime Regions. Unified commanders are designated coordinators for SAR activities in these regions. They have the primary responsibility for developing plans and providing facilities to meet SAR needs of US military forces. Also, they have the ancillary responsibility of representing all US SAR interests in their area.

f. *On-Scene Commander (OSC)*. The official designated by the SAR mission coordinator for coordinating and controlling a specific SAR mission at the scene.

g. *Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)*. A center established by each SAR Coordinator within their area of operational responsibility for coordinating and controlling SAR operations.

h. *Search and rescue*. The employment of available personnel and facilities in rendering aid to persons and property in distress.

i. *SAR Coordinator*. The official (or agency in the case of regions) responsible for the SAR organization within a given area and for the coordination of SAR operations within that area.

j. *SAR facilities*. Any unit, command, device, or system used for SAR operations.

k. *SAR mission*. A mission executed to search for and recover/rescue persons in distress. The object of a SAR mission is usually in an unknown location, with an unknown medical condition or injury.

l. *SAR Mission Coordinator*. The official designated by the SAR Coordinator for coordinating and controlling a specific SAR mission.

4. Policies

a. The Armed Forces of the United States provide SAR support for their own operations. In addition, they have traditionally accepted, to the extent possible, a moral and humanitarian obligation to aid nonmilitary persons and property in distress.

b. The Department of the Army will make Army resources available to support the National SAR Plan, as required, on a noninterference basis with primary Army missions. Army resources will be effectively integrated and coordinated in support of the National SAR Plan.

c. Authority for conducting SAR missions in support of military operations is delegated to local commanders. This authority also extends to imminent serious conditions and when Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) air traffic control agencies request in-flight Army aircraft to provide immediate assistance to aircraft in distress. All other direct requests for SAR assistance from civil authorities will be referred to the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) or appropriate USCG RCC.

d. Army aircraft with a primary mission of aeromedical evacuation normally will not be used to conduct lengthy search operations. Nor will they be used in the recovery of human remains unless the conditions in g(3) below apply. This does not preclude commanders from assigning responsibility to aeromedical units under their command for providing SAR support to local military operations.

e. The search phase of SAR operations involving Army aviation resources should be accomplished by the most cost effective aircraft available with maximum use of observers.

f. The rescue or recovery phase of SAR operations should be accomplished by aircraft equipped to provide required medical or life-sustaining support.

g. The recovery of human remains is the responsibility of civil authorities. Army assistance in this area should only be considered when—

(1) Requested by authorized local authority.

(2) Military resources represent the only means of recovery (i.e., inaccessible, remote crash site, unavailability of commercial/civilian resources).

(3) The recovery of human remains can be accomplished concurrently with the recovery of survivors, if such action does not jeopardize the survivors.

h. The provisions of this regulation are not intended to limit the prerogative of local commanders in providing SAR assistance in support of US forces within their area or under imminent serious conditions.

5. Responsibilities

a. The Commander, USAF Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS), Military Airlift Command, is designated the USAF Executive Agent for the coordination of SAR operations in the Inland Region. The AFRCC at Scott AFB, IL, performs for the Commander, ARRS the functions shown below to assist both military and civilian persons in distress.

(1) Serves as the single Federal agency for coordinating SAR activities within the Inland Region.

(2) Processes all SAR incidents requiring Federal assistance regardless of the source of request or Federal resource responding.

(3) Maintains a SAR network capable of rendering assistance to persons in distress regardless of whether or not military forces are available.

(4) Formulates and formalizes SAR agreements with Federal, State, local, and private agencies having SAR capability to make the National SAR network a viable entity.

b. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and

(1) Develop policy for the use of Army resources in providing SAR assistance to civil authorities.

(2) Approve the use of Army resources for the recovery of human remains.

c. The Commanding General, US Army Forces Command (CG, FORSCOM) is responsible for the coordination of Army SAR assistance provided to civil authorities. As the Army SAR coordinator, CG, FORSCOM may task installation commanders directly to provide SAR resources and assistance as needed. Coordination with the appropriate major Army command (MACOM) will normally be made before tasking if the urgency of the situation permits.

d. Installation commanders will—

(1) When tasked by FORSCOM, provide SAR resources within their capabilities.

(2) Designate at least one primary and two alternate installation SAR coordinators. (Designation as Installation SAR Coordinator will be an additional duty.)

(3) Establish and publish local SAR operating procedures.

e. Installation SAR coordinators will direct local SAR operations and act as liaison between the installation commander and the appropriate civilian SAR coordinator.

6. Concept of operations

a. FORSCOM will serve as coordinator for all Army SAR support of the National SAR Plan within CONUS. Wartime SAR procedures and responsibilities are in AR 525–90. SAR operations outside of CONUS will be accomplished as determined by the appropriate unified command.

b. Requests for Army SAR assistance will be transmitted to FORSCOM by the AFRCC or USCG RCC. FORSCOM, in turn, will task the appropriate MACOM or Army installation to provide the required assistance.

c. Upon receiving FORSCOM tasking, the installation SAR Coordinator will coordinate directly with the local civil SAR Coordinator or organization requiring assistance.

d. Requests for SAR assistance outlined in paragraph 4g must be approved by HQDA(DAMO–ODS). If the conditions in paragraph 4g(3) apply or overriding humanitarian considerations preclude obtaining prior approval, HQDA will be telephonically notified through appropriate Army SAR channels. In SAR operations involving the recovery of human remains, safety will be the primary consideration, and such assistance must be in accordance with local and State law.

e. Army SAR assistance will terminate when any of the following occurs:

(1) The SAR object is recovered.

(2) The AFRCC/USCG RCC or FORSCOM terminates the mission.

(3) Military mission requirements prevent providing further assistance.

7. Types of SAR missions

Missions that may be performed by Army aircraft in support of SAR operations (to include those in support of disaster relief) include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Aerial drop of medicine, food, emergency supplies, and livestock feed.

b. Aeromedical evacuation of the sick and injured.

c. Rescue of stranded personnel.

d. Transport and guidance of surface rescue parties.

e. Message drop and pickup, courier service, and communications.

f. Wire-laying for emergency communications.

g. Illumination for night operations.

h. Photographic and reconnaissance missions.

i. Insect control.

j. Providing warning or information on—

(1) Areas to be evacuated.

(2) Transportation facilities.

(3) Available evacuation routes.

(4) Measures to be taken to protect property and livestock.

8. Use of USAR and ARNG assets

USAR units or any of their assets may be used to perform SAR operations only under the following conditions:

a. When ordered to active duty (AD) as a result of a declaration of a national emergency in accordance with Section 672 or 673 of title 10 United States Code.

b. When ordered by HQDA on recommendation of the CONUS Army commander as annual training (AT). When recommending the use of USAR assets to HQDA, the following information will be provided:

(1) A brief statement of the situation.

(2) Assistance being provided by the State and local authorities, to include the National Guard.

(3) Support required and estimate of duration.

(4) If commercial resources are not used, a statement that military assistance will not be in competition.

(5) Whether or not assistance has been requested from or provided by other military departments.

c. When approved on a voluntary basis by HQDA upon recommendation of the appropriate CONUS Army commander in an active duty for training (ADT) status. USAR units or their assets may not be used to perform SAR operations as inactive duty training (IDT).

d. When approved on a voluntary basis by CG, FORSCOM on the findings that an imminent serious condition exists and the delay caused by obtaining HQDA approval is unwarranted. This authority may be further delegated by CG, FORSCOM as necessary to minimize reaction time. Any action taken under those circumstances will be reported to HQDA as soon as possible.

e. ARNG personnel are considered State assets and will remain under the control of the governor of the respective State when not on active Federal duty. Any request for the use of ARNG personnel must be coordinated with the governor. This is normally accomplished through the office of the State Adjutant General.

9. Rescue Information Report (RCS HAF–XOO (D&AR) 7119)

a. The format for opening, daily progress, and closing reports on SAR missions is outlined in volume 5, part 2, chapter 10, JCS Pub 6. This report provides information on rescue mission activity and mission status. The AFRCC is responsible for preparation and distribution of rescue information reports on Inland Region SAR missions.

b. Information on Army SAR assistance provided by CONUS installations will be reported by telephone to FORSCOM Operations Center (FOC) according to Annex B, FORSCOM Military Assistance to Civil Authorities Plan (MACAP). The FOC will then transmit this information to the AFRCC (or appropriate USCG RCC) for inclusion in SAR reports as appropriate.

10. Funding

The provision of SAR assistance by Army units is an unprogramed requirement for which the Department of the Army does not budget or retain fund reserves. Commands/installations providing SAR assistance must absorb costs incurred in SAR operations within existing funds. The impact of such costs will be reported in normal budget reports.

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